

Pakistan's Statement on Rights of Child

Chairperson,

Pakistan delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General UN for his valuable reports on the follow-up to the Special Session of the General assembly on Children as well as the detailed Study of the Independent Expert of the Secretary General on Violence against Children.

2. The independent expert's study has revealed the shocking levels of violence against children taking place around the globe, cutting across culture, class, education, income and ethnic origins in all the regions. Unfortunately majority of violent acts against children are perpetrated by people who are part of their lives: parents, teachers, schoolmates, employers and caregivers.

Chairperson,

3. Any kind of violence and maltreatment against children exacts extraordinary costs to society. In the long run, it can result in lifelong social and health problems for children, including post-traumatic stress disorder, antisocial and aggressive behaviours, impaired academic and work performance and greater involvement in criminal activities.

4. To achieve the vision of building safer communities for children would require a holistic and multi-pronged approach. Any such approach, primarily anchored at the national level with strong and assured assistance by the international community and the UN should focus on the following major areas:

- i) **First**, promotion of an agenda for development and implementation of MDGs can make crucial difference in challenges of poverty eradication, globalization, migration, urbanization, health threats particularly the HIV/AIDs that afflicts many regions.
- ii) **Secondly**, we should concentrate on conflict resolution. The plight of millions of children in 30 major armed conflicts has caused permanent disability to 6 million children, exploitation of 250,000 children as child soldiers, 10,000 of girls subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence and displacement of over 14 million children. These are alarming figures and call for appropriate response.
- iii) **Thirdly**, we need to address diseases, which threaten children the most. 10.8 million children die each year, six million are victim of disease.

Effective measures to reduce under-five mortality, vaccination and immunization campaigns, improvement of maternal health and overcoming epidemics such as malaria and related illnesses, can make a big difference.

- iv) **Fourth**, another major front is education. Progress in this sector worldwide has been encouraging but considerable efforts and resources will be required to achieve the target set out in MDGs. It is a matter of great concern that an estimated 150 million primary school-age children including 62 million girls are still out of school. Our efforts must also address the special needs of the girl child.

Chairperson,

5. Pakistan had the honour to host one of the nine regional consultations during the preparation of the Independent Expert's study. The South Asian regional consultation held in May 2005 in Islamabad aimed to review the situation of violence against children in the region. One major outcome of the consultation was the formation of the "South Asia Forum for Ending Violence against Children" comprising representatives of the eight countries in the region, civil society, and a children's group working for violence against children. This South Asia Forum was tasked to monitor the governments' commitments and follow up actions regarding violence against children. The first meeting of the Forum was held in August this year and focused on the theme of early marriages and physical and psychological violence against children.

6. I would like to highlight some of the major steps taken in Pakistan to eradicate the menace of violence against children and to promote the rights of the child:

- i) Successive amendments in the Criminal Law of Pakistan have outlawed, un-Islamic and harmful traditional practices of early and forced marriages like Vani and Swara.
- ii) Pakistan is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ILO's Core Conventions, the SAARC Convention on Regional Agreements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia and SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.
- iii) A National Commission for Child Welfare and Development with its subsidiary institutions all over the country is dedicated to promote the implementation of CRC. A National Plan of Action has been

prepared in consultation with all stakeholders including children, which focuses on policy and strategic interventions for addressing key child protection issues.

- iv) The Juvenile Ordinance 2000 is an effective instrument to prevent capital punishment to juvenile offenders and to create separate prison facilities.
- v) The corporal punishment in schools has been banned in all the four provinces in Pakistan. Besides, a Code of Ethics for teachers, at the provincial level, has been adopted which strictly prohibits any harsh treatment of children in schools.
- vi) To promote literacy, education is free up-to 10th grade in all four provinces. The literacy drive lays equal emphasis on the girl child. The National Plan of action on **Education for All** aims to achieve universal enrolment of primary level by 2015. Special incentives such as provision of uniforms and text books and provision of meals in schools are available to encourage education of girl child.
- vii) The Health sector has been accorded priority. The immunization campaign covers 77% children at present. With a larger allocation to social sector we are confident to achieve 100% coverage as well as other MDGs.
- viii) Eradication of child labour is a priority for the Government. In collaboration with private sector, ILO and civil society, child labour has been successfully eradicated from soccer ball and carpet industry. Efforts are underway to eradicate its prevalence from surgical industry.

Chairperson,

7. The various initiatives and developments mentioned today demonstrate Pakistan's clear conviction and commitment to the welfare and development of children at national, regional and global levels. We are now fast moving from rhetoric to reality and strongly believe that every child on this planet will get her/his rights in a foreseeable future.

I thank you, Chairperson.

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STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

ON AGENDA ITEM 63:

- (a) PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN; AND,**
- (b) FOLLOW-UP TO THE SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN**

AT THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE
61ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK
12 OCTOBER 2006**

